

Field Report – *Ex-USS Kittiwake (ASR-13)*
April 18 - 20 2010
Dominion Marine Group, Norfolk, VA

Participants

Cayman Islands

Nancy Easterbrook (Divetech) – Project Manager
Jay Easterbrook (Divetech)
Scott Slaybaugh – CIDOE
John Mackenzie – West Indian Marine

MARAD

Willie Barnes

DMG

Tim Mullane

EPA

Laura Johnson – OCPD
Laura Casey – ORCR

Purpose – The purpose of the site walk was to meet with representatives from the Cayman Islands and their remediation contractors and conduct mid-project review and site walk.

Background – In 2003, the Cayman Islands began the process to take title of the Kittiwake from MARAD. The Kittiwake was transferred to the James River Reserve Fleet in the late 1990s by the US Navy. In January 2010, MARAD completed the title transfer process to the Cayman Islands Government. The vessel was then towed from the James River to Dominion Marine Group, Norfolk, VA where it will be remediated and prepared for sinking as an artificial reef off of Grand Cayman Island. The projected sink date is July 6, 2010.

The Kittiwake is a Chanticleer Class Submarine Rescue Vessel built and commissioned in 1944. Dimensions are as follows –

Length – 251’ 4”
Beam – 42’
Draft – 16’
Displacement – 2,045 tons (full load)
Propulsion – Diesel-Electric, single screw, 3000 h.p.

Weather – Morning weather was clear and sunny with light clouds, no wind and in the low 40s/high 50s. Afternoon weather was clear and breezy with a few clouds and in the low 60s.

PPE - Level D was worn by EPA personnel. Level D for this specific site consisted of hard hats equipped with head lamps, leather or latex gloves, safety glasses and steel-toed boots. In addition, EPA carried flashlights and batteries (including spares), small hand tools such as Leatherman multi-purpose tools, notebooks, pens and cameras.

Vessel Conditions – The Kittiwake is now flying the Cayman Islands flag and has had “Dive Cayman” stencils prominently placed on the vessel. A stencil of the Caymans flag is also on the stack. Originally the stern was stenciled with “Property of U.S. Government”; it now reads “Property of the Cayman Islands Government”. Prior to boarding a ship’s wheel and helm were delivered. These will be placed in the wheelhouse/Pilot House.

The Kittiwake is in the midst of remediation and preparation for sinking. Large holes have been cut into the main deck opening up the lower decks and many walls and bulkheads have been removed to open up below decks. Several locations onboard were pretty much unrecognizable at first pass such as the crew berthing area and the propulsion rooms. When compartments are opened up, the crews are smoothing out the cut edges to prevent divers from becoming snagged and/or cut. DMG is also taking a hard look at whether or not items or structures pose a hazard to divers if there is any doubt about a particular item they will removed it, widen or move an access point or open an area up to provide more maneuverability.

An area approximately equal to “mid-ships” was off limits due to Asbestos and insulation removal. This included the engine room and associated machine spaces, compressor and air tank rooms and officers berthing areas.

At least one 40 cu yd roll-off of cabling and wires has been removed and sent to TW Services for disposal as regulated PCB waste.

DMG has assigned at least one person to keep up with the housekeeping onboard. Personnel are also prohibited from eating, drinking and smoking onboard which should cut down on the amount of discarded trash onboard.

Vessel Walk Through – After donning work vests, boarding took place at approximately 9:18 am on the Main Deck or 1 Deck. The ship is tied up to a barge and boarding this time was by walking across a single barge and 2 gangways. Shore power has been installed and temporary lighting system was available in many parts of the ship.

Stern – Winches have been opened up for cleaning and fish habitat. The winches will be steam cleaned and some may be coated with a product called “Cement Coat” to provide a rougher substrate for marine life to attach. The “worm drives” used to power the winches have been severed and will be removed. All winches will be checked for lubricants/residues and loose bits of machinery such as the worm drives will be removed.

A diesel generator on the stern was boomed off and had 3M pads underneath to catch drips

Booms are still on the deck awaiting reattachment to the stern A-frame.

Hyperbaric/Recompression Chamber Room – Some of the insulation has been removed and the compartment opened up. Air storage tanks will be opened up and either left empty or will be filled with potable water.

Disembarked at 12:55 pm - Upper decks, main deck and engine and machine spaces complete.

Reboarded vessel at 2:45 pm – The rest of the afternoon will spent below deck.

Disembarked at 5:20 pm